



Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!



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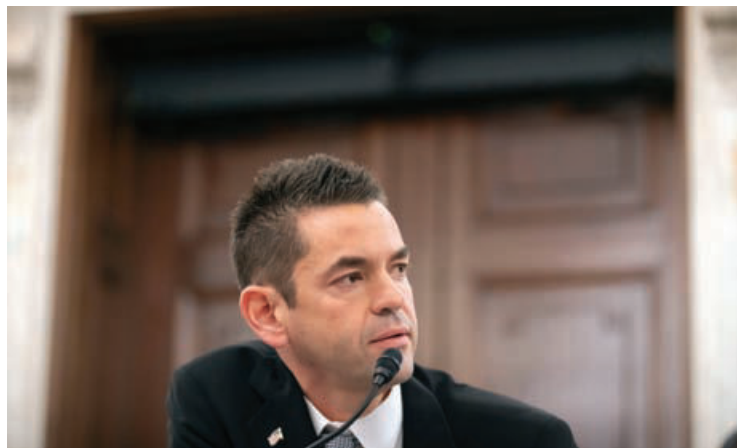


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Jared Isaacman, President Donald Trump's pick to be NASA Administrator, listens during a hearing of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee on Capitol Hill, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press.

Billionaire spacewalker is back before the Senate seeking NASA's top job

By **MARCIA DUNN**
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.
(AP) — Billionaire spacewalker Jared Isaacman urged senators on Wednesday to take swift action on his bid to lead NASA, after being yanked and then renominated by President Donald Trump. Isaacman appeared before the Commerce, Science and Transportation

Committee in Washington eight months after his first nomination hearing. The tech entrepreneur who's rocketed into orbit twice with SpaceX stressed the need for "full-time leadership" at NASA as the space agency prepares to send astronauts back to the moon early next year. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy has been filling in as NASA's acting admin-

istrator since summer. Returning astronauts to the moon for the first time in more than 50 years will be "a challenging endeavor to say the least," Isaacman told the committee led by Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas. NASA is targeting early next year for a lunar flyaround by four astronauts. They won't land on the moon; that would happen in another mission. The goal is to beat the Chinese there by the end of the decade. "This is not the time for delay but a time for action because if we fall behind -- if we make a mistake -- we may never catch up, and the consequences could shift the balance of power here on Earth," Isaacman told the committee. Cruz agreed. "NASA cannot take its eyes off the ball," he said, referring to China's looming moon plans. "The United States must remain the unquestioned leader in space exploration." Isaacman was within days of being confirmed by the Senate as NASA's 15th administrator when Trump pulled his nomination in May. The move came soon after Trump's falling out with SpaceX's Elon Musk. The president renominated Isaacman last month. Cruz said Isaacman's second appearance "feels a bit like Groundhog Day" and hopes to have him confirmed by the end of the year. In response to questioning by senators, Isaacman described both the moon and Mars as priorities for exploration by U.S. crews, with parallel efforts underway. He said he supports Duffy's recent move to reopen the contract for the lunar lander needed for the first touchdown by astronauts under NASA's Artemis program. Elon Musk's SpaceX won the original crew lunar lander contract with Starship, but the mega rocket remains in flight testing. Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin is hustling to gain the lead with its Blue Moon landers; a prototype is due to launch early next year. □

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UPS put profits over safety before plane crash that killed 14, lawyer alleges

By JEFFREY COLLINS
Associated Press

A deadly UPS cargo plane crash in Kentucky stemmed from corporate choices that favored profits over safety, according to a lawyer who filed two wrongful death lawsuits Wednesday, which allege the company kept flying older aircraft without increasing maintenance beyond what's regularly scheduled.

Last month's fiery crash happened during takeoff after the plane's left engine detached, and cracks were later found where the engine connected to the wing, the National Transportation Safety Board said. The lawsuit also names General Electric, which made the plane's engine. Both UPS and GE said they don't comment on pending lawsuits but safety remains their top priority as they assist the federal investigation.

Robert Clifford, a lawyer representing two of the victims killed on the ground, said those cracks show the MD-11 jets, which average more than 30 years old, are too dangerous for package delivery companies to keep in the air. The Fed-



Allen Wilson, right, hugs an attendee after they wrote on crosses for victims during a vigil Thursday, Nov. 6, 2025, in Louisville, Ky., after a UPS plane crashed at Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport.

eral Aviation Administration has grounded all MD-11s, which had exclusively hauling cargo for more than a decade.

Three pilots and 11 people on the ground were killed on Nov. 4 when the plane, fully loaded with fuel for a flight to Hawaii, plowed into businesses just outside the airport in Louisville, where UPS has its largest package

delivery hub.

Clifford said UPS was saving money and aircraft downtime by keeping "old, tired" planes in the air while not increasing the number of inspections. Fellow attorney Bradley Cosgrove said at a news conference that they believe inspections should have found the cracks cited by federal investigators, adding, "This plane should

have never been in the air."

The lawsuits filed in state court are on behalf of the families of Angela Anderson, 45, who was shopping at a business by the airport, and Trinadette "Trina" Chavez, 37, who was working at Grade A Auto Parts. "We intend to stand up for 'Nena' and fight for her, no matter how long it takes,

just like Nena always did for us," said Chavez's sister, Gabriela Hermosillo-Nunez, calling her by another nickname that her eight younger brothers and sisters used. The suit also names Boeing, which acquired the original manufacturer of the plane McDonnell Douglas, and VT San Antonio Aerospace, Inc., which inspected and maintained the plane. The two companies did not respond to email and phone messages seeking comment.

The jet that crashed had just finished more than six weeks of extensive maintenance, completed Oct. 18, in which VT San Antonio Aerospace crews repaired significant structural issues, according to the lawsuits. Those included repairing a crack in the center wing fuel tank, addressing corrosion on structural components, and lubricating parts involved in attaching the engine to the wing.

The engine mount hadn't undergone a detailed inspection since 2021, and the plane wasn't due for another detailed inspection of that part for another 7,000 takeoffs and landings. □

Associated Press.

San Francisco sues nation's top food manufacturers over ultraprocessed foods

By JAIMIE DING
Associated Press

The city of San Francisco filed a lawsuit against some of the nation's top food manufacturers on Tuesday, arguing that ultraprocessed food from the likes of Coca-Cola and Nestle are responsible for a public health crisis.

City Attorney David Chiu named 10 companies in the lawsuit, including the makers of such popular foods as Oreo cookies, Sour Patch Kids, Kit Kat, Cheerios and Lunchables. The lawsuit argues that ultraprocessed foods are linked to diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, fatty liver disease and cancer.

"They took food and

made it unrecognizable and harmful to the human body," Chiu said in a news release. "These companies engineered a public health crisis, they profited handsomely, and now they need to take responsibility for the harm they have caused."

Ultraprocessed foods include candy, chips, processed meats, sodas, energy drinks, breakfast cereals and other foods that are designed to "stimulate cravings and encourage overconsumption," Chiu's office said in the release. Such foods are "formulations of often chemically manipulated cheap ingredients with little if any whole food added," Chiu

wrote in the lawsuit.

The other companies named in the lawsuit are PepsiCo; Kraft Heinz Company; Post Holdings; Mondelez International; General Mills; Kellogg; Mars Incorporated; and ConAgra Brands.

None of the companies named in the suit immediately responded to emailed requests for comment. The Consumer Brands Association, a trade group that represents many food manufacturers, said companies adhere to the safety standards established by the Food and Drug Administration.

"There is currently no agreed upon scientific definition of ultra-processed

foods and attempting to classify foods as unhealthy simply because they are processed, or demonizing food by ignoring its full nutrient content, misleads

consumers and exacerbates health disparities," Sarah Gallo, senior vice president of product policy for the group, said in a statement. □



Bottles of Coca-Cola products sit on a shelf at a store in Dania Beach, Fla., Oct. 20, 2020.

Associated Press.

Pete Hegseth faces deepening scrutiny from Congress over boat strikes

By **STEPHEN GROVES** and **LISA MASCARO**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pete Hegseth barely squeaked through a grueling Senate confirmation process to become secretary of defense earlier this year, facing lawmakers wary of the Fox News Channel host and skeptical of his capacity, temperament and fitness for the job.

Just three months later, he quickly became embroiled in Signalgate as he and other top U.S. officials used the popular Signal messaging application to discuss pending military strikes in Yemen. A Pentagon Inspector General's report delivered to lawmakers Wednesday found his actions posed a risk to personnel and mission.

And now, in what may be his most career-defining moment yet, Hegseth is confronting questions about the use of military force and demands he release the videotapes after a special operations team reportedly attacked survivors of a strike on an alleged drug boat off the coast of Venezuela. Some lawmakers and legal experts say the second strike would have violated the laws of armed conflict.

"These are serious charges, and that's the reason we're going to have special oversight," said Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi, the Republican chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The scrutiny surrounding Hegseth's brash leadership style is surfacing what has been long-building discontent in Congress over President Donald Trump's choice to helm the U.S. military.

And it's posing a potentially existential moment for Hegseth as the congressional committees overseeing the military launch an investigation amid mounting calls from Democratic senators for his resignation. Hegseth vowed a 'warrior culture,' but lawmakers take issue



Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth speaks during a Cabinet meeting at the White House, Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press.

Since working to become defense secretary, Hegseth has vowed to bring a "warrior culture" to the U.S. government's most powerful and expensive department, from rebranding it as the Department of War to essentially discarding the rules that govern how soldiers conduct themselves when lives are on the line. Hegseth on Tuesday cited the "fog of war" in defending the follow-up strike, saying that there were explosions and fire and that he did not see survivors in the water when the second strike was ordered and launched. He chided those second-guessing his actions as being part of the problem.

Yet the approach to the operation was in line with the direction of the military under Hegseth, a former infantry officer with the Army National Guard, part of the post-Sept. 11 generation, who was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and earned Bronze Stars.

During a speech in September, he told an unusual gathering of top military brass whom he had summoned from all corners of the globe to the Quantico Marine Corps Base in Virginia that they should not "fight with stupid rules of engagement."

"We untie the hands of our warfighters to intimidate, demoralize, hunt and kill the enemies of our country," he said. "No more politically correct and overbearing rules of engagement, just common sense, maximum lethality and authority for warfighters."

But now lawmakers and military and legal experts say the Sept. 2 attack borders on illegal military action.

"Somebody made a horrible decision. Somebody needs to be held accountable," said Sen. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican who in January held out support for Hegseth until only moments before casting a crucial vote for his confirmation.

"Secretary Talk Show Host may have been experiencing the 'fog of war,' but that doesn't change the fact that this was an extrajudicial killing amounting to murder or a war crime," said Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.

"He must resign." Rep. Don Bacon, a Republican who served 30 years active duty in the Air Force, finishing his career at the rank of brigadier general, said he hasn't been a fan of Hegseth's leadership. "I don't think he was up to the task," Bacon said.

Will Hegseth keep Trump's support?

Trump, a Republican, has largely stood by his defense secretary, among the most important Cabinet-level positions. But the decisions by Wicker, alongside House Armed Services Chair Mike Rogers of Alabama and the top Democrats on the committees, to open investigations provide a rare moment of Congress asserting itself and its authority to conduct oversight of the Trump administration. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., who shepherded the defense secretary's nomination to confirmation, has said the boat strikes are within Trump's authority as commander in chief and he noted that Hegseth serves at the pleasure of the president.

"I don't have, at this point, an evaluation of the secretary," Thune said at the start of the week. "Others can make those evaluations."

But Hegseth also has strong allies on Capitol Hill, and it remains unclear how much Republicans would actually be willing to push back on the president, especially when they have spent the first year in his administration yielding to his various demands.

Vice President JD Vance, who cast a rare tiebreaking vote to confirm Hegseth, has vigorously defended him in the attack. And Sen. Eric Schmitt, another close ally to Trump, dismissed criticism of Hegseth as "nonsense" and part of an effort to undermine Trump's focus on Central and South America.

"He's not part of the Washington elite," said Schmitt, R-Mo.

"He's not a think tanker that people thought Trump was going to pick. ... And so, for that reason and others, they just, they don't like him."

Tension between some Republican lawmakers and the Pentagon has been rising for months. Capitol Hill has been angered by recent moves to restrict how defense officials communicate with lawmakers and the slow pace of information on Trump's campaign to destroy boats carrying drugs off the coast of Venezuela.

As he defends his job, Hegseth has spoken to both Wicker and Rogers, the top lawmakers overseeing the military.

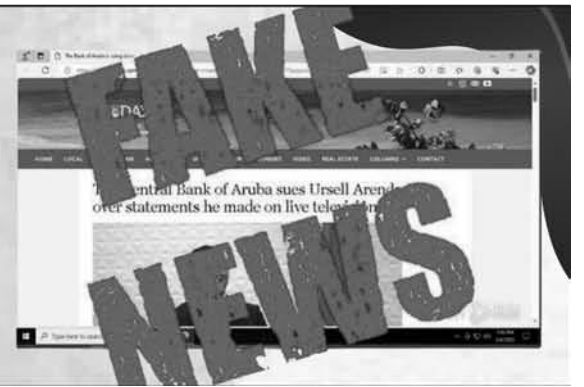
Rogers said he was "satisfied" with Hegseth after that conversation, while Wicker said that he told Hegseth that he would like him to testify to Congress. Hegseth at first tried to brush aside the initial report about the strike by posting a photo of the cartoon character Franklin the Turtle firing on a boat from a helicopter, but that only inflamed criticism of him and angered lawmakers who felt he was not taking the allegations seriously.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York called Hegseth a "national embarrassment," adding the defense secretary's social media post of the cartoon turtle is "something no serious leader would ever think of doing." Schumer repeated his insistence Wednesday that Hegseth "release the full, unedited tapes" of what happened. □

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Iran's currency falls to a new low as nuclear sanctions squeeze its ailing economy

By AMIR VAHDAT
Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's rial currency fell Wednesday to a new low of 1.2 million to the U.S. dollar as nuclear sanctions squeeze Tehran's ailing economy.

Traders offered the new exchange rate as attempts so far to restart negotiations between America and Iran over its nuclear program appear stalled.

The new record low is increasing pressure on food prices and other costs have been making daily life that much more challenging for Iranians. Prices are up on meat, rice and other staples of the Iranian dinner table. Meanwhile, people worry about a new round of fighting between Iran and Israel as well as potentially the United States after June's 12-day war.

"Life will not only become more difficult for ordinary people, but it will also fuel public concern over wheth-



Current and pre-revolution Iranian banknotes are displayed by a street money exchanger at Ferdowsi square, Tehran's go-to venue for foreign currency exchange, in downtown Tehran, Iran, Aug. 28, 2025.

Associated Press.

er the government given the limited inflow of foreign currency caused by sanctions has the resources to main-

tain and repair the country's aging infrastructure," said Ali Moshtagh, a 53-year-old electrical engineer.

Iran's economy has been severely affected by international sanctions, particularly after U.S. President Donald

Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018. At the time of the 2015 deal, which saw Iran drastically limit its enrichment and stockpiling of uranium in exchange for lifting of international sanctions, the rial traded at 32,000 to the dollar. After Trump returned to the White House for his second term in January, he restarted his so-called "maximum pressure" campaign targeting Tehran with sanctions. He again went after firms trading Iranian crude oil, including those selling at a discount in China. In late September, the United Nations reimposed nuclear sanctions on Iran via what diplomats referred to as its "snapback" mechanism.

Those sanctions again freeze Iranian assets abroad, halt arms deals with Tehran and penalize any development of Iran's ballistic missile program, among other measures. □

Former EU foreign policy chief arrested in latest scandal to hit the bloc

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN and
LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union's former foreign policy chief faces corruption accusations alongside two other people arrested this week as part of a fraud investigation, prosecutors said Wednesday, in the latest scandal to hit the 27-nation bloc.

The arrest of Federica Mogherini, who led the EU foreign service from 2014 to 2019, risked tarnishing the EU's international image just as it seeks to assert influence in negotiations aimed at ending the war in Ukraine. The EU has been urging Ukraine to tackle

rampant corruption. Authorities in Belgium made the arrests Tuesday after raiding the offices of the EU diplomatic service in Brussels and a college in Bruges. Mogherini now serves as the rector of the College of Europe, a prestigious institute of European studies. The European Public Prosecutor's Office said in a statement that Mogherini, a senior staff member of the college and a senior official from the European Commission were detained at its request and questioned by the Belgian Federal Judicial Police.

"The accusations concern procurement fraud and corruption, conflict of inter-

est and violation of professional secrecy," the prosecutor's office said.

The three were not considered flight risks and were released, the office said.



European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, right, attends a meeting of EU foreign ministers at the EU Council building in Brussels, Nov. 25, 2019.

Associated Press.

As the bloc's top diplomat, Mogherini was responsible for supervising the Iran nuclear talks, leading efforts to improve long-strained relations between Serbia and Kosovo, and a host of other foreign policy and security issues.

Police searched the properties of the suspects, several buildings of the college and the headquarters of the European External Action Service, or EEAS, the EU's equivalent of a foreign office, which sits at the center of the bloc's institutions in Brussels, the prosecutors said.

No outside actor, or country, has been named so far in the investigation. □

EU updates asylum guidance for Syrians a year after Assad's fall

By RENATA BRITO

Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)

— The European Union on Wednesday issued updated guidance for asylum applications by Syrian nationals that reflects new conditions in Syria a year after the fall of the Bashar Assad. The changes may influence the result of asylum requests of some 110,000 Syrians who were still awaiting an asylum decision at the end of September.

The European Union Agency for Asylum said opponents of Assad and military service evaders “are no longer at risk of persecution.” But the agency said other groups may be considered at risk in the post-Assad Syria, including people affiliated with the former government and members of the Alawites, Christians, and Druze ethnic-religious groups.

While decisions on asylum applications are made at a national level, the agency's guidance is used to inform the 27 EU member states, as well as Norway and Switzerland. The goal is to create greater coherence



Refugees from Syria arrive at the train station in Dortmund, Germany, Sept. 6, 2015.

Associated Press.

between the 29 nations granting international protection.

The number of Syrians requesting asylum dropped significantly from 16,000 in October 2024, before the fall of Assad, to 3,500 in September 2025. Still, Syrians had the most number of cases awaiting a decision at first instance.

Syria's conflict that began in March 2011 killed nearly half a million people and displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million. More than 5 million Syrians fled the country as refugees. While most sought refuge in neighboring countries like Turkey, many also went to Europe, contributing to the conti-

nent's refugee crisis in 2015. Between 2012 and June 2025, EU member states plus Norway and Switzerland granted refugee status to around 704,900 applicants from Syria in first instance decisions, according to the European asylum agency. The EUAA said the situation in Syria is “considered improved but volatile” since

Assad's fall in December 2024, and that “indiscriminate violence continues to take place” in certain parts of Syria.

Many Syrians had high hopes after Assad was brought down in an offensive by insurgent groups in early December. However, sectarian killings against members of Assad's Alawite minority sect in Syria's coastal region and against the Druze minority in the southern province of Sweida earlier this year has claimed hundreds of lives. Still, the agency said it now considers Damascus, the capital, to be safe.

The agency also cited two other groups living in Syria who should remain eligible for refugee status: LGBTQ+ people and Palestinians in Syria who no longer receive United Nations assistance or protection.

Since the fall of Assad in December, more than one million people have returned to Syria and nearly 2 million internally people have returned to their regions, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. □

What to know about missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 as search resumes

Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)

— More than a decade ago, Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 vanished without a trace, sparking one of aviation's most baffling mysteries.

Despite years of multinational searches, investigators still do not know exactly what happened to the plane or its 239 passengers and crew.

On Wednesday, Malaysia's government said American marine robotics company Ocean Infinity would resume a seabed hunt for the missing plane on Dec. 30, reigniting hopes that the plane might finally be found.

A massive search in the southern Indian Ocean, where the jet is believed to have gone down, turned up almost nothing. Apart

from a few small fragments that washed ashore, no bodies or large wreckage have ever been recovered.

Here's what we know about the deadly aviation tragedy.

'Good night, Malaysian

Three Seven Zero'

The Boeing 777 disappeared from air-traffic radar 39 minutes after departing Kuala Lumpur for Beijing on March 8, 2014.

The pilot's last radio call to Kuala Lumpur “Good night, Malaysian Three

Seven Zero” was the final communication before the plane crossed into Vietnamese airspace and failed to check in with controllers there.

Minutes later, the plane's transponder, which broadcasts its location, shut down. Military radar showed the jet turn back over the Andaman Sea, and satellite data suggested it continued flying for hours, possibly until fuel exhaustion, before crashing into a remote section of the southern Indian Ocean. Theories about what happened range from hijacking to cabin depressurization or power failure. There was no distress call, ransom demand, evidence of technical failure or severe weather.

Malaysian investigators in 2018 cleared the passen-

gers and crew but did not rule out “unlawful interference.” Authorities have said someone deliberately severed communications and diverted the plane.

Passengers came from many countries

MH370 carried 227 passengers, including five young children, and 12 crew members. Most passengers were Chinese, but there were also citizens from the United States, Indonesia, France, Russia and elsewhere.

Among those aboard were two young Iranians traveling on stolen passports, a group of Chinese calligraphy artists, 20 employees of U.S. tech firm Freescale Semiconductor, a stunt double for actor Jet Li and several families with young children. Many families lost multiple members. □



The shadow of a Royal New Zealand Air Force P3 Orion is seen on low level cloud while the aircraft searches for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 in the southern Indian Ocean, near the coast of Western Australia, March 31, 2014.

Associated Press.

Aruba: the legend behind its name

(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curaçao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed differ-

ent dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curaçao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

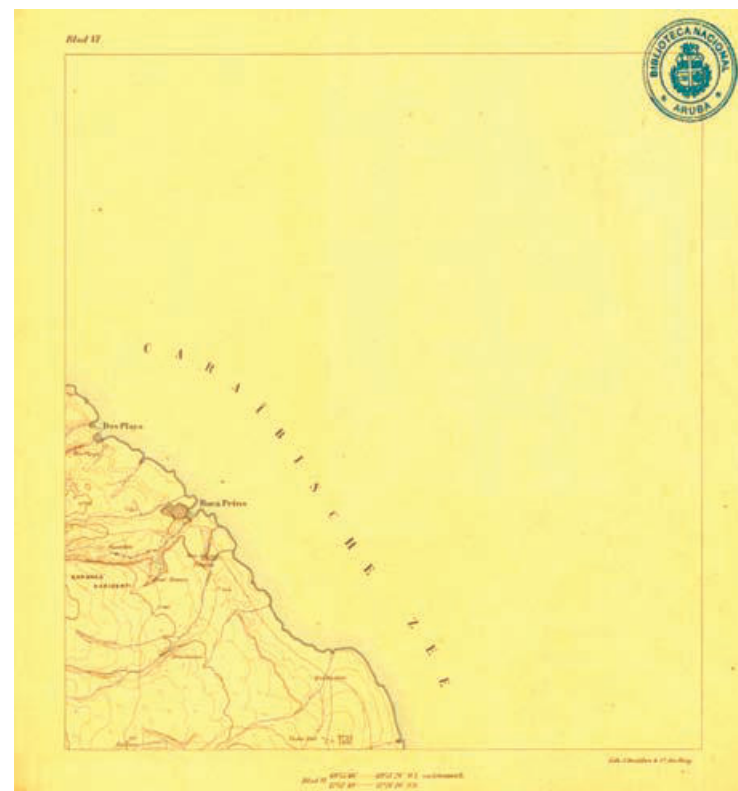
The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety

of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.



And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old

boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island.□

Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock.

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Nestled in the heart of Palm Beach, Aruba, L'Avenue brings a fresh breeze of Belgian charm to the Caribbean. Just over a year since its grand opening, this intimate bistro has quickly made its mark with its warm hospitality, authentic cuisine, and elegant yet approachable ambiance.

Whether you're strolling through Palm Beach after a morning at the beach or looking for a special dinner spot, L'Avenue welcomes you with an inviting terrace, stylish décor, and the comforting aroma of Belgian classics crafted to perfection. It's a place where locals, travelers, food lovers, and beer connoisseurs come together — united by a love for great food, heartfelt service, and that unmistakable European flair.

At L'Avenue, every dish tells a story — one of tradition, seasonality, and bold yet balanced flavors. From crispy croquettes and perfectly poured Belgian beers



to steaming pots of fresh mussels flown in weekly, the menu offers something both comforting and surprising. Lunch includes a variety of sandwiches—with a healthy selection of bread options—if you're going for a light meal, but just like their dinner selection, also includes steak, chicken, fish, and even rabbit if you're craving a bit more of L'Avenue's exquisite menu. And let's not forget their wide selection of Belgian beer and European wine to complete the tasty experience! But that's not all! L'Avenue is offering their guests their Early Bird Special, available every day from 4pm to 7pm. Enjoy this affordable and delectable 3-course meal special at a comfortable price of \$29.50 per guest, which includes a selection of their fine in-house wine.

More Than a Bistro A Culinary Destination

L'Avenue is more than just a place to eat — it's a culinary destination. A thoughtfully curated menu, an extensive selec-

tion of premium Belgian beers, and an atmosphere that balances European elegance with island ease make it one of the most talked-about dining spots in Aruba.

Whether you're looking for a casual lunch, a romantic dinner, or a celebratory evening with friends, L'Avenue delivers a dining experience that's as memorable as it is delicious.

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Aruba to me: "We love this island"



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes

without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Silvia and Ubirajara Canabarro from Porto Alegre, Brasil. They wrote to us saying: "Coming to Aruba is the most anticipated moment of the year for us. Returning to this enchanting corner of the world is always special. We love this island."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐

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The Brownstone Ribs and Seafood | The Market
Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Moments & Memories Jewelry
Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts
Treasure Cove | El Patio Tacos & Tequila | M8 Boutique
Fusion Restaurant, Tapas, Wine & Piano Bar

Adriaan Laclé: One of Aruba's richest men in the twentieth century

(Oranjestad)—The name Adriaan Laclé may ring a bell to locals as one of the main roads on the island, but about a century ago, Adriaan Laclé was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business ordeals, but during his hay day he often helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned several plots of land. In fact, he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor—now a restaurant. Though he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Today his

house still stands in good condition and can be found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad.

Regarding his personal life, it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first marriage but lost his wife soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it has been said that only 11 of those 17 made it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica's mansion functions as the townhall, used to host civil marriages, while



Maximilian and Maria Veneranda's house stands on the opposite side of the road to them—though currently under renovation after

years left in ruin. □

Source: *De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)* by Evert Bongers.

Aruban snacks and where to find them

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change? How about some Aruban snacks that you can find all around the island? Hop in your car, and go to these locations to find some of the most popular and tasty snacks that are beloved by our locals.

One of the staples of Aruban cuisine and snacks is the Pastechi. Pastechi is a Caribbean fried pastry that is filled with cheese, meat, chicken, veggies and sometimes even fish! Or perhaps you might



want to try a croquette, locally called a "kroket," which is a crusty fried snack with typically a meat and dough mix filling. The Aruban kroket is based on its Dutch counterpart, the "bitterbal".

These two snacks are typically found in all local snack trucks, which can be found all over the island, including on the side of the main road that stretches from San Nicolas to the Hotel Area. You can also find them at local bakeries all over the island. These places may also sell other snacks and sandwiches too, perfect for on-the-road lunch break.

While you're at it, why not accompany your snack with a refreshing "batido"? Batidos are fruit shakes, typically made with added milk for some creaminess. However, you can also ask to hold the milk. Batidos are commonly found in snack



shops too. You may find some batidos along the flea market downtown.

If you are looking for something a bit more fresh and healthy, why not



try some coconuts, or shaved ice from local vendors? These vendors carry their little shop at the back of their truck, so they are ever-moving around the island. However, there are a few spots where you can almost always find a coconut/shaved ice vendor:

- Right next to the Red Anchor in San Nicolas, on the way to Baby Beach.
- Along the main road next to the airport field.
- At the California Light House.
- At the Alto Vista Chapel.

These vendors may also sell other delights, like the beloved coconut-based dessert "cocada" or peanuts. All in all, in Aruba, you can always find some place to take a break and have a bite of something local, you maybe just might have to look for them!

Photo credit: wheninaruba.com

Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!



(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health

and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They



were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times on the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and

rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserve our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen!☐

Aruba's kite flying tradition

(Oranjestad)—Every year for King's Day, Arubans gather with friends and family to fly kites. Big or small, paper or plastic, blue skies fill up with these colorful flying contraptions, brightening our yearly celebration of the Dutch Monarch.

The tradition of flying kites starts at home in the weeks leading up to

King's Day. These kites were traditionally made with things found in the nearby mondi* and in the kitchen at home. Using dried up cactus sticks for the frame, old news papers, and glue made from flour, water and salt to dry faster (some people even use cornstarch slurry as glue), kids usually make their own kites with their friends,



parents or other close family members. Tails are made from old bed sheets, ripped and tied together to create a long string of fabric trailing behind the back end of the kite. To finish off the process, people used fish lines or thin rope to tie three corners of the kite together. Another long string of rope is tied in the knotted center and bundled up, used to steer the kite as it flies in the air. Decorating the kite was especially important, and children would use paint to create their own designs—the more colorful,

the better!

People usually fly their kites in big open fields, like empty soccer and baseball fields found all around the island around noon, when the sun is at its brightest. In the past few years, kite flying has become a sport in which groups of people would battle against each other to see whose kite is the biggest, the prettiest, and whose could fly flawlessly and longer in the air.

*Mondi: Aruban woods.

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Candelchi!

ORANJESTAD—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Candelchi" (Squirrelfish), a common, yet shy fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, known as Santa Rosa, offers this informative article that illustrates some fish and their names in Papiamentu.

Candelchi, Squirrelfish, *Holocentrus adscensionis*:

Candelchi actually refers to the entire squirrelfish family or, as some say, when we say candelchi, we mean several different species but without distinguishing them by species. In this picture, we are showing the most common one in



our waters, which is called squirrelfish in English or scientifically known as *Holocentrus adscensionis*.

Under candelchi, we in Aruba generally refer to all the

different species of squirrelfish. They all look alike and it's really difficult to distinguish between them.

The squirrelfish family is dis-

tinguished by the following characteristics. They are heart-shaped with pink or red hues and often show heart-shaped streaks between the scales along

the body. They have hard fins and are always armed. Over at our sister island Curaçao, they are called "bari di clabo" (nail barrel) for that reason.

In our waters, there are 7 to 8 types or species present and they are sometimes caught and seen occasionally. They can be distinguished by different marks such as color on the dorsal spine or marks on the body.

In Aruba:

Candelchi are found on reefs or areas with structure in the water where they can hide. Although they prefer to hunt for food at night, they are also active during the day. They are edible and delicious when prepared dry and crispy with lime. It is particularly challenging to scale the fish, which is why it is not one of the favorites among fishermen. They often live in groups. □

Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names; Ayo & Alto Vista



(Oranjestad)—Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn

not only the beautiful names but the history behind it that gives it life and meaning.

Ayo

Ajo, or Ayo, is a word with Arawak-Indian origin. A (or Ha) is an Indo-Antillean generalizing word. If you were to change a part of the word "Ayo", namely 'Yo', to 'Yu' and make 'Ayu', it would mean "white."

However, as we now know,

the name of the neighborhood is 'Ayo'. The word 'Yo' stands for Yocahu, which is another word for 'creator' in Arawak/Taino and in the Papiamentu spoken today, 'Ayo' means 'bye'.

At Ayo, you can find some of the most well known rock formations. These formations became a well loved and visited attraction at Aruba that is held in high regards by both tourists and locals



alike.

If you'd like to know more about the rock formations at Ayo, stay tuned for our article where we tell you all about its location and history.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; A.

Alto Vista

This word combination can be roughly translated to a 'high point of view' and the neighborhood received this name from the Hill.

In the surrounding areas,

Domingo Antonia Silvestre built his by his own means the very first chapel or church of Aruba. The walls of this church were made with rocks but the roof was made of dry corn stalks. The church was inaugurated by father Pablo Algemesi.

If you'd like to know more about the Alto Vista Church's beautiful history, stay tuned for our article where we tell you all you need to know about it for when you visit it.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; AV. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Craig of "Skyfall"
7 Speedy
11 Marigold color
12 Ready for business
13 Warning with no follow-through
15 English racing town
16 Shopping aid
18 A+, for one
21 Ethanol source
22 Eye part
24 Mine matter
25 Sedan or SUV
26 Like Pride Parade participants
27 Willful
29 Chess turn
30 Placed down
31 Fast runner
32 Toil away
34 Like some gas stations
40 "Got it"
41 Book worker
42 Tavern order
- 43 Burglar alarm part

DOWN

- 1 Buck's mate
2 Ulna's place
3 Catch some z's
4 Hospital worker
5 Sphinx setting
6 "Why don't we!"
7 Layout
8 King Kong, for one
9 Marlin's home
10 Booming stuff
14 "Iliad" author
16 Reef material
17 Game setting
19 Strictness
20 Rascal
21 Farm grazer
22 Operated
23 Pro vote
25 Musical closes
28 Boat part
29 Singer
31 Large mob
33 Honey bunch
34 Tell tales
35 Purpose
36 Director Spike
37 "— not for me to say"
38 Pigeon sound
39 Make missteps

A	B	A	C	K		R	E	N	A	L
P	E	C	A	N		A	R	E	N	A
P	E	E	V	E		P	A	T	T	Y
				A	L	O	T	S	I	S
S	M	A	L	L	D	O	G			
L	I	L	I		E	R	R	O	L	L
I	C	I	E	R		S	I	N	A	I
M	E	T	R	O	S		Z	E	T	A
			S	C	U	Z	Z	I	E	R
L	A	S		K	E	E	L			
A	M	U	S	E		B	I	P	E	D
M	O	N	E	T		R	E	E	V	E
A	S	S	E	S		A	S	P	E	N

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11							12			
13							14			
			15							
	16	17				18		19	20	
21					22					23
24				25				26		
27			28				29			
	30					31				
			32		33					
34	35	36						37	38	39
40					41					
42					43					

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-12

CRYPTOQUOTE

K'G QC Q LRQUY KE GF

RKMY VJYE YOOQEHI QOY

ICQOCKET CX UXBEC QI

TXKET XBC. — QEXEFGXBI

Cryptoquote: SNOWFALL ROUSES
YOUR INNER CHILD TO DREAM AND PLAY ONCE
MORE. — ANGIE WEILAND-CROSBY

Cruise ship Schedule: Dec. 01 - 07 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	01	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2	08.00	20.00	C	1
TUE	02	ROTTERDAM	07.00	****	B	1
		AIDAMAR	08.00	18.00	C	1
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	I	1
WED	03	ROTTERDAM - Dept.	****	17.00	B	
		BRITANNIA	07.00	18.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	08.00	16.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
THU	04	CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE	08.00	20.00	B	1
		CORAL PRINCESS	09.00	18.00	C	1
		SEABOURN OVATION	09.00	22.00	I	1
		SILVER SHADOW	08.00	18.00	H	1
FRI	05	CARNIVAL LIBERTY	09.00	22.00	C	1
SAT	06	KONINGS DAM	07.00	16.00	B	1
		AIDAPERLA	09.00	22.00	C	1
		STAR CLIPPER	09.00	18.00	G	1
SUN	07	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

						3	9	
		4					8	6
8		5	3		1	7		2
2				4			6	8
	8		5		9			3
	5				8	4		
				8	7			
3	9	1				8		
							5	4

Difficulty: ★★★

12/4

Answer to previous puzzle

8	2	3	5	6	4	9	7	1
6	1	4	9	7	8	5	2	3
9	5	7	1	2	3	8	6	4
5	3	6	7	9	1	4	8	2
1	8	9	4	5	2	7	3	6
7	4	2	3	8	6	1	5	9
3	7	5	2	1	9	6	4	8
2	9	8	6	4	5	3	1	7
4	6	1	8	3	7	2	9	5

Difficulty: ★★★

12/3



People watch the sunset from the Liberty Memorial grounds in Kansas City, Mo., May 12, 2025.

Researchers slightly lower study's estimate of drop in global income due to climate change

By ALEXA ST. JOHN
Associated Press

The authors of a study that examined climate change's potential effect on the global economy said Wednesday that data errors led them to slightly overstate an expected

drop in income over the next 25 years.

The researchers at Germany's Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, writing in the journal Nature in 2024, had forecast a 19% drop in global income by 2050. Their revised analysis puts the figure at 17%.

The authors also said in their original work that there was a 99% chance that, by midcentury, it would cost more to fix damage from climate change than it would cost to build resilience. Their new analysis, not yet peer-reviewed, lowered that figure to 91%. The Associated Press reported on the original study. Nature posted a retraction of it Wednesday. □



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Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel.524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Eagle: Tel.587 9011
San Nicolas:
Centro Medico:Tel.584 5794

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

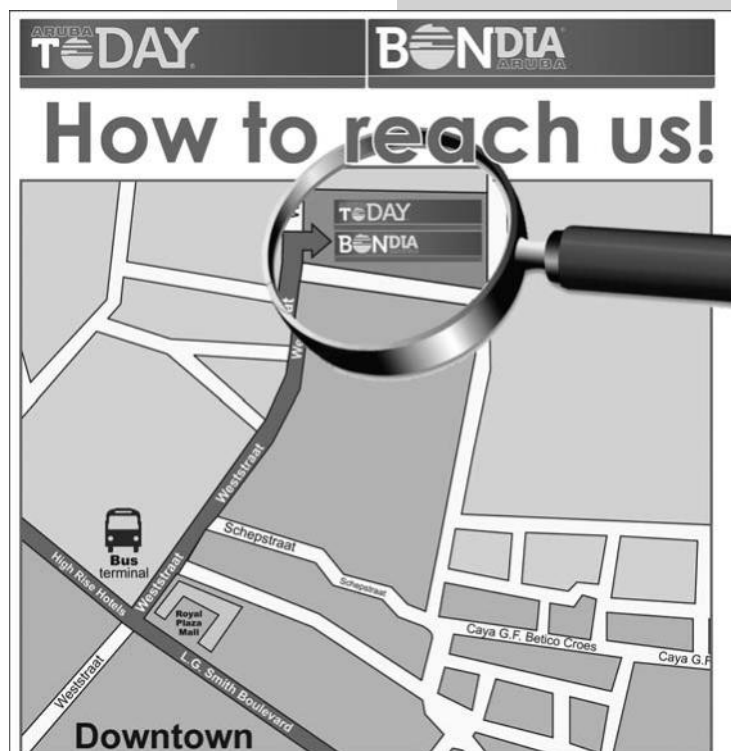
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Doping at your doorstep: The next Olympic drug crisis could be coming through the mail

By **EDDIE PELLIS**

AP National Writer

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.

(AP) — The next Olympic doping scandal could be delivered right to your doorstep.

A trove of so-called research chemicals known as peptides, many of them banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency and some not approved for human use in the United States, are available with the simple click of a button through online retailers. One seller is Amazon. Another is Alibaba, a sponsor of the International Olympic Committee. The easy availability of the drugs combined with their hard-to-detect nature is precisely the toxic combination doping regulators and Olympic officials are trying to avoid. With the Milan Cortina Games just two months away, they are hoping to break a string of scandals involving the Russians and Chinese that have disrupted the Games, both summer and winter, since 2014.

Though online pharmaceuticals and supplements have for years been portrayed as a risk by anti-doping authorities, the influx of certain hard-to-detect peptides chains of protein-building amino acids marketed to help with anything from anti-aging to workout recovery to weight and memory loss presents a more difficult challenge. "These substances have proliferated," said Oliver Catlin, president of the Anti-Doping Sciences Institute, whose late father, Don, was among the godfathers of antidoping research.

Most of these peptides are so-called "research chemicals" that are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and are also banned by the WADA code, either under its "S2" category that encompasses peptides or under its "S0" classification, a catch-all category for "non-approved substances."

The few substances specifically listed under the "S0" category such as the hot-selling BPC 157 are placed



The Olympic rings adorn the Stadio Olimpico del Ghiaccio, which will be called Cortina Curling Olympic Stadium, venue for the curling discipline at the Milan Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics, in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025.

Associated Press.

there because the pharmacological make-up of the substances don't fit neatly into another category on the banned list.

One tricky part of the "S0" category is that it includes unapproved substances that aren't specifically listed because, for instance, there is no way to test for that drug and regulators don't want to reveal that to users. Catlin's research found hundreds of the banned or illegal peptides available on the online market and an ever-shifting menu of items, with some of them removed after The Associated Press started asking questions.

"It's not like it happened overnight," Catlin said. "The mainstream use of peptides has exploded in the last five years."

Amazon, Alibaba respond to questions about availability of peptides

Dan Burke, a former FDA official who now heads intelligence and investigations at the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, said the new-age peptides are hard to corral online because the American law prohibiting their sale dates to 1938 "and it just isn't working and doesn't work to this day."

"The bad guys know it, and that's why the stuff proliferates," Burke said.

Though some peptides insulin and the newly popular weight-loss dynamo GLP-1 are among the best examples are time-tested, perfectly legal (with a prescription) and effective, other substances in the category are not legally marketable, either as supplements or prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

A number of them, including BPC-157, could be found on multiple online sites, including Amazon and Alibaba. The latter is a major IOC sponsor "committed to helping the IOC transform the Olympic Games for the digital era."

Asked by AP about this connection, an IOC spokesperson said Alibaba "confirmed to us that it consistently monitors its marketplaces and that it does not have prohibited substances for sale from the WADA 2025 list." Approached by AP, a representative for Alibaba.com asked for links to "problematic" drugs sold by its marketplace and, after the AP sent two of them, said they had removed those items.

The company said it bars all prohibited substances in accordance to the WADA banned list.

"Although some of these substances may not be le-

gally restricted in ordinary consumer contexts, we have proactively adopted stricter standards to define operational boundaries and our compliance efforts go beyond passive adherence and minimum legal requirements," the company said in a statement.

Amazon told AP it requires all products offered on its marketplace to comply with applicable laws and regulations, and is in the process of removing products that violate its policies. A few days after being contacted by AP, the website removed some of the drugs the AP had asked about, but a number of listings remained and some new ones popped up.

Information much easier to find than in the BALCO days The current peptides boom comes some 25 years after the late Victor Conte became a household name in sports by developing and selling "the clear" and "the cream."

Those were the names for so-called designer steroids that led to the infamous scandal that emerged from Conte's Bay Area Lab Co-operative (BALCO) and engulfed baseball and track. Like some peptides, designer steroids were impossible to detect at the time but

they were not easy to obtain. It took years to uncover their existence, let alone to analyze their efficacy or sanction the athletes who used them.

Fast forward 25 years and this new model of performance enhancers are, in some cases, just as difficult to detect but as easy to purchase as clicking a few buttons on a computer.

WADA spokesman James Fitzgerald said the availability of PEDs on websites isn't under its jurisdiction, but that WADA began teaming with national anti-doping and law enforcement agencies two years ago to tackle the illegal manufacture, sale and supply of performance enhancers of all sorts.

"The illegal manufacture and trafficking of PEDs is not just a problem for sport it is a societal issue that requires a multi-faceted approach," he said.

Will this trigger the next Olympic doping scandal? Whether the proliferation of the drugs could be the trigger point of the next Olympic scandal could take years to uncover.

Like some of the blood-boosting drugs they purport to mimic, most peptides disappear from the blood quickly, which makes them hard to detect. The IOC stores blood samples for up to 10 years to account for possible improvements in detection long after the event ends.

USADA and other anti-doping organizations have spent years warning athletes about the potential legal and eligibility risks of using unapproved substances whether via prescription drugs or unvetted supplements while also articulating the health risks for elite athletes and others looking to gain a small advantage in the gym.

"From a consumer-buyer-beware standpoint, anytime you consume or inject something where you don't know what you're taking, there's the possibility of adverse health effects, and that's concerning," said Matt Fedoruk, USADA's chief science officer. □



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Australia, New Zealand drawn into same group at 2027 Rugby World Cup

By JOHN PYE
AP Sports Writer

(AP)—Host Australia and three-time champion New Zealand were drawn into the same group Wednesday for the expanded Rugby World Cup in 2027, with the winner likely to meet defending champion South Africa in the quarterfinals.

No. 2-ranked New Zealand was the last team pulled out in the draw by World Rugby chairman Brett Robinson in Sydney. Australia had already been placed into Pool A from the second band of teams that were ranked from seventh to 12th.

"As an Australian, you always love to (play) New Zealand," Wallabies captain Harry Wilson said, before proposing that the Bledisloe Cup showdown should be the tournament opener. "The opening match of a World Cup, doesn't get much better than that!"

"In the World Cup, if you want to win it, you've got to beat the best teams, and they're obviously one of the best teams in the world."

The All Blacks are on an 11-match winning streak against two-time World Cup champion Australia, which has slumped to No. 7 in the rankings. The Tasman rivals will be joined by Chile and Hong Kong in the group stage.

South Africa, aiming for a third consecutive title, was the next-to-last team pulled in the draw and landed in Pool B with Italy, Georgia and Romania.

The result means the 2023 finalists could meet in the quarterfinals, if both the Springboks and the All Blacks top their groups.



Australia's Harry Potter catches the ball during the rugby union Nations Series match between France and Australia in Saint-Denis, outside Paris, Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025.

Associated Press.

"We are pleased with the pool we have been drawn in, but this is a World Cup and every team will go out there with great passion and do their utmost to represent their nations with pride," Springbok coach Rassie Erasmus said in a statement. "There have been surprises in the tournament before, so we'll need to be up mentally and physically for every match."

England, winner of the last Rugby World Cup staged in Australia in 2003, was drawn into Pool F with Wales, Tonga and Zimbabwe.

England head coach Steve Borthwick refused to be drawn on potential opponents beyond the group stage and expressed caution.

"We know the margins in the knockout games, with so many decided by less than three points," Borth-

wick said.

No. 6 Argentina was drawn into Pool C with Fiji, Spain and Canada, while three-time finalist France will face Japan, the United States and Samoa in Pool E. Ireland is in Pool D with Scotland, Uruguay and Portugal.

"There's a lot of matchups England-Wales, Ireland-Scotland there's a lot of clumps that are going to be teams that know each other, and play each other often," Australia head coach Joe Schmidt said. New Zealand will "be looking at Australia and thinking, 'Well, at least we're going to know who we're up against.'"

"It's a trans-Tasman battle which I think both teams are going to love having," France coach Fabien Galthié said his side can win the tournament after falling short as favorite on home soil in 2023, when it

was agonizingly beaten by one point in the quarterfinals by South Africa.

"Yes, that's our ambition. In a very clear manner I say yes," Galthié said. "France has never done it and that's our ambition. To be forever the first. The pressure is always there in a way and that's normal." Galthié was pleased with the draw, even though he struck a cautious note.

"The team we know best is Japan, we'll actually be facing them in Tokyo this summer," he said. "It's a group that appears manageable to us. It's perfect for building momentum." The runner-up in Pool A will meet the runner-up in Pool E, likely Japan, in the Round of 16 and likely England in the quarterfinals. The winners of Pools C and D are seeded to meet in the quarterfinals.

The French are seeded to top Pool E, which would

set up a last-16 match against the runner-up in Pool D and a likely quarter-final against the winner of the second-place teams in Pool C and Pool F.

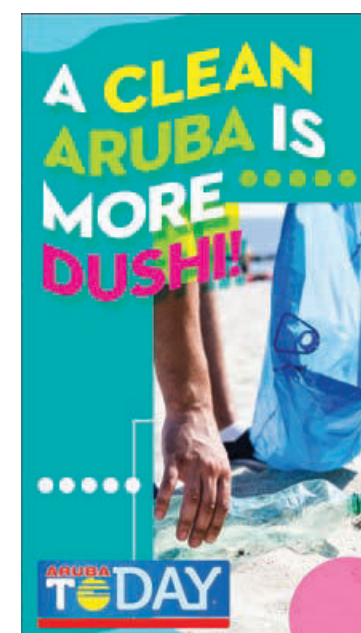
The tournament was expanded to 24 teams for the 2027 edition, which kicks off in Perth on Oct. 1 and culminates in a Nov. 13 final in Sydney.

The teams were divided into four bands of six based on World Rugby rankings at the time of the draw.

Each of the six pools contain one team from each of the four bands.

The Australians, World Cup winners in 1991 and '99 and runners-up the last time the tournament was played Down Under, missed a seeding in the top six after their first winless November tour to Europe since 1958.

The addition of four teams in the draw means the tournament will have a Round of 16 for the first time, a stage that World Rugby chairman Robinson predicted "brings greater jeopardy, earlier knockout drama, and even more entertainment from the opening matches." □



Germany picked by UEFA to host 2029 European Championship in women's soccer

By **GRAHAM DUNBAR**

AP Sports Writer

NYON, Switzerland (AP) —

Germany will host the 2029 European Championship in women's soccer, promising record revenue and attendances to drive forward the game's development on and off the field.

UEFA voted overwhelmingly Wednesday for the Germany bid in a three-candidate contest and opted for the promise of financial results and sporting potential with the national team playing in sold-out stadiums in Munich and Dortmund.

Germany's eight-city project for an expected 16-team, 31-game Women's Euros beat Poland and a co-hosting bid by Denmark and Sweden.



UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin shows the name of Germany, during the the announcement ceremony for the host country of the UEFA Women's EURO 2029, in Nyon, Switzerland, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025.

Associated Press.

UEFA executive committee members gave 15 votes to Germany, two to the Scandinavians and none to Poland. UEFA president Aleksander

Ceferin said it was "heart-breaking" that any of the three bids should lose before he pulled Germany's name out of the envelope to an-

nounce the winner.

A large German soccer federation delegation posed for team photos at UEFA headquarters then all pulled on white national-team jerseys with the number 29 on the front.

"With all the stadiums we have now I think it is very exciting to see and to play there," said Germany goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger, who came to Switzerland to back the bid directly from Madrid where she played Tuesday evening in the Women's Nations League final.

This latest German win means that within a generation, from 2006 to 2029, the country will have hosted men's and women's World Cups for FIFA and men's and

women's Euros for UEFA.

Switzerland set a tournament record attendance hosting a popular and successful Euro 2025 in July with total crowds of more than 650,000 at an average of 21,000 per game.

Germany expects to draw more than one million spectators in its much bigger stadiums also in Cologne, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hanover, Leipzig and Wolfsburg.

"We think we can fill the stadiums because women's football has had such a great development in the last few years," German bid leader Heike Ullrich said.

UEFA's strategy for women. A German-hosted Women's Euros can aim to make a profit after UEFA budgeted to subsidize the more intimate Swiss-hosted tournament with 25 million euros (\$29.1 million).

"It is a tournament of a massive scale in '29 that Germany can offer," UEFA director of women's soccer Nadine Kessler told The Associated Press.

"That is exactly what we want to take advantage of — to properly put women's football globally on the map." Euro 2029 will slot between the last 32-team Women's World Cup hosted by Brazil in 2027, and the first 48-team edition in 2031 hosted mostly in the United States.

"We will be on par with World Cups," said Kessler, a former Germany national-team standout. "Financially but also sportingly, all these prejudices we have been facing for many, many years I think they will be wiped away by '29."

Scandinavians denied again

The Denmark-Sweden bid offered a similar level of sold-out smaller stadiums while Poland looked to speed its progress toward being a women's soccer power in Europe.

With the Women's Euros expected to be a 24-team tournament in future, Germany also was seen as a safe bet after that expansion which would be a greater challenge to the other bidders Wednesday. □



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